

job was as a teacher in Rockfort, Texas, eighteen miles from Sherman, where she taught the first four grades. It was during those years that she met her future husband, Homer Akers, who was training to be a Presbyterian minister. They married on June 19, 1930, at the First Baptist Church in Sherman, and their first home was the Presbyterian manse in Natalia, Texas.

Homer and Mary Louise Akers spent the next 47 joyous years together until his death in 1977. During their marriage, Rev. Akers served as a minister in seven Texas communities, each about four years each, and in Portales, New Mexico, from 1947 until 1968, a location that will always be considered home. A daughter, Margaret Louise, was born in 1931, but only lived a few days past her third birthday. A second daughter, Kathryn Ann, was born in 1936, and Mary Louise currently lives with her in Santa Fe.

In her 100 years upon this earth, Mary Louise Akers is known and deeply loved and admired by hundreds, if not thousands, of those whose lives she has touched during her extraordinary 100-year journey. She loved serving as the primary greeter in all the churches her husband served and was the voice most heard when hymns were sung. She has always been a famous "jokester," constantly teasing her family and friends with her delightful, bubbly personality and infectious laughter. Having a perfect memory, Mary Louise can readily recall wonderful, enduring and entertaining stories about all those whom she has known.

Mary Louise Akers has abundantly enjoyed her 100 years. She has always been extremely active and enjoys attending community events and traveling with her daughter. A few of her passions are having tea parties with family and friends, attending an Aker family reunion every July, receiving cards and letters and writing many herself, going to the beauty shop every Friday, and eating lots of strawberry jam every morning and drinking a Coke every afternoon, which she considers her "tickets" to a long life. Her very favorite "supper" food is a chocolate sundae with "lots" of syrup!

Mary Louis Akers is a very grand lady, and the world has been, and continues to be, a better place because of her presence in it. Driving a car up until her 80's, Mary Louise's CB "handle" was "Sunshine Mary", I can think of no more accurate way to describe this delightful lady. I invite all my colleagues in the U.S. House of Representative to join me in wishing Mary Louise Akers a very happy and healthy 100th birthday, may she enjoy many more to come!

TRIBUTE TO MAJOR GENERAL
LEROY BARNIDGE, JR.

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, today I wish to pay tribute to an exceptional officer in the United States Air Force, an individual that a great many of us have come to know personally over the past few years—Major General Leroy Barnidge, Jr. General Barnidge, who currently serves as Director of the Air Force

Office of Legislative Liaison, will retire after 32 years of honorable active duty Air Force service. During his time in Washington, and especially with regard to his work here on Capitol Hill, General Barnidge personified the Air Force core values of integrity, selfless service and excellence in the many missions the Air Force performs in support of our national security. Many Members and staff have enjoyed the opportunity to meet with him on a variety of Air Force issues and came to deeply appreciate his character and many talents. Today it is my privilege to recognize some of General Barnidge's many accomplishments, and to commend his superb service he provided the Air Force, the Congress and our Nation.

General Barnidge was commissioned through the ROTC program in 1971. His career has spanned a variety of operations and maintenance assignments, including major command and Joint Staff billets. He is experienced in aircrew operations, flight line maintenance and combat support activities. The General has also performed major command staff and executive support functions, as well as duties as a force planner and division chief in the Joint Staff. He has commanded a combat crew training squadron, a logistics group, an operations group, a B-1B bomb wing and the B-2 wing at Whiteman Air Force Base, MO. General Barnidge also completed the Program for Senior Officials in National Security at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, and Seminar XXI, Foreign Political and International Relations, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He received special recognition in 1999 as the winner of the Air Combat Command Moller Trophy, recognizing him as the best Wing Commander among 28 other commanders. General Barnidge has amassed over 2,900 hours in the T-37, T-38, OV-10, B-52G, B-1B, and B-2 aircraft.

Throughout his distinguished career, General Barnidge exceptional leadership skills were always evident to both superiors and subordinates as he repeatedly proved himself in numerous select command positions.

In his years of working with the Congress, General Barnidge provided a clear and credible voice for the Air Force while representing its many programs on the Hill, consistently providing accurate, concise and timely information. His integrity, professionalism, and expertise enabled him to develop and maintain an exceptional rapport between the Air Force and the Congress. The key to his success, I believe, was his deep understanding of Congressional processes and priorities and his unflinching advocacy of the programs essential to the Air Force and to our nation. I am greatly appreciative of General Barnidge's 32-year service to his nation and offer my sincere wishes for a happy and prosperous retirement. On behalf of the Congress and the country, I thank General Barnidge, his wife Sandy, and his entire family for the commitment and sacrifices that they have made throughout his honorable military career. These family sacrifices demonstrate their commitment to our nation and their contributions do not go unnoticed. I know I speak for all of my colleagues in expressing my heartfelt appreciation to General Barnidge for a job well done. He is a credit to both the Air Force and the United States. We wish our friend God-speed in his retirement.

REGULATORY CERTAINTY IN
TELECOM MARKETPLACE IS A
MUST

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, today, I rise to talk about at an FCC decision that will have dire consequences for the telecommunications industry.

In February, I submitted an op-ed to Roll Call for their annual Telecommunications and Technology issue prior to the FCC vote on the Section 251 Unbundling Obligations of Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers. In the article, I reserved hope that the FCC would render a decision that could provide regulatory certainty to a sector that is in desperate need of stability. If not, I stated that Congress should step in and remedy this issue.

The FCC did not provide regulatory certainty when they voted, and three months later, they have yet to publish their decision. This decision, whatever it looks like in final form, will lead to litigation, assuring this issue will not be resolved for many years . . . unless Congress acts swiftly. Without regulatory certainty, the telecom industry, CLECs and ILECs alike, will continue to experience employee layoffs, cuts in capital expenditures, and little investment and growth.

The FCC had an opportunity to ensure regulatory certainty in the telecom marketplace, but failed. Congress must provide this much needed certainty, and it must do it soon.

USPS STAMP ADVISORY COMMITTEE SHOULD ISSUE A STAMP TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT PLIGHT OF MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

HON. SHERWOOD BOEHLERT

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, May 20, 2003

Mr. BOEHLERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today, along with Representative NICK LAMPSON, Chairman of the Congressional Missing and Exploited Children's Caucus, to announce the introduction of a resolution expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the United States Postal Service (USPS) Stamp Advisory Committee should issue a stamp to raise awareness about the plight of missing and exploited children. It is only fitting that such an action should occur today, on National Missing Children's day.

My local community was shocked one afternoon in August 1993 when 12-year-old Sara Anne Wood was abducted near her home in Sauquoit, NY. Far too many parents have had to suffer with the agony of not knowing if their child was safe—we need to be more vigilant in protecting our nation's children.

The idea for this stamp should be credited to the Missing Children's Stamp Committee, a grass roots organization of concerned citizens from my district whose goal is to convince the USPS Stamp Advisory Committee to issue a commemorative stamp to raise awareness about the plight of all missing and exploited children nationwide.